

Washington, DC – In the Book of Ecclesiastes, it is written “for every thing there is a season.” After prayerful reflection and numerous conversations with constituents who both supported and opposed my re-election, it is with a heavy heart that I have concluded that Speaker Pelosi’s season has passed. Consequently, I cannot in good conscience support her nomination as House Minority Leader for the 112th Congress.

On a personal level, I hold Speaker Pelosi in the highest regard. We served together on the House Intelligence Committee. I have long admired her intelligence as well as her tenacity. Her leadership was responsible for the House Democrats winning the majority in 2006 and then securing the passage of legislation that improves the lives of millions of Americans. In fact, I believe that Nancy Pelosi’s speakership in terms of her ability to forge consensus from the different views within the House Democratic Caucus was truly one for the history books.

There comes a time, however, when one must put the future of the country and the Democratic Party ahead of purely personal considerations. Having Speaker Pelosi as the face of our party in the U.S. House of Representatives for the next two years will not allow us to rebuild for the future. It will make it more difficult for us to recapture the moderate and independent voters who deserted the Democratic Party in droves this November. It will make it more difficult for us to make inroads in rural America which shifted from blue to red in historic proportions. In fact, I don’t see how we will be able to recruit candidates to run in the South and other red states with Speaker Pelosi at the helm.

The Editorial Page of The New York Times expressed it best last week. It said that “what House Democrats need is what Ms. Pelosi has been unable to provide: a clear and convincing voice to help Americans understand that Democratic policies are not bankrupting the country, advancing socialism or destroying freedom. If Ms. Pelosi had been a more persuasive communicator, she could have batted away the ludicrous caricature of her painted by Republicans across the country as some kind of fur-hatted commissar jamming her diktats down the public’s throat. Both Ms. Pelosi and Harry Reid, the Senate majority leader, are inside players who seem to visibly shrink on camera when defending their policies, rarely connecting with the skeptical independent voters who raged so loudly on Tuesday ... Congressional Democrats need a new champion to stand against a tightly disciplined Republican insurgency.”

Given the fact that we suffered substantial losses in the election, I think a new face is needed for leadership of the Democratic Caucus. For this reason, I will not vote for Speaker Pelosi as House Minority Leader. I will be supporting an alternative candidate with somber thoughts of

my moderate to conservative colleagues who were battered into defeat by her image in countless thirty-second spots.

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